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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

PROGRESS MADE IN THE FORMULATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SUBREGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMMES AND THE REGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMME IN AFRICA

Note by the secretariat

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Under decision 11/COP.1, the information provided in national reports is supplemented by information provided at the subregional and regional levels, as well as that contained in other reports, in order to enable the Conference of the Parties (COP) to review the implementation of the Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and the operation of its institutional machinery, in the light of experience at the national, subregional, regional and international levels, and also to make appropriate recommendations for efforts to achieve its objectives on the basis of an analysis of progress made.

2. In accordance with decision 5/COP.2, paragraph 2, which refers to the fact that the reports of affected African countries are to be examined at the third Conference of the Parties, the secretariat undertook the preparation of this report, which summarizes the information relating to activities carried out at the subregional and regional levels.

3. Where subregional action programmes (SRAPs) are concerned, the information contained in this document is taken from the reports submitted by the intergovernmental organizations which are the focal points or liaison centres for subregional activities. These organizations are: the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU). The full reports submitted by these organizations are available on the secretariat's Web site (www.unccd.de).

4. Concerning the regional action programme (RAP), this report basically describes progress in this area as facilitated by the secretariat at the request of African partners.

II. SUMMARY OF REPORTS ON THE PROCESSES RELATING TO THE SUBREGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMMES AND THE REGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMME

5. Examination of the various reports received prompts the following remarks and observations:

(a) SRAPs

6. The SRAP processes in the various subregions of the African continent are progressing fairly satisfactorily despite often difficult circumstances, including inadequate resources allocated for this process and a low level of commitment by cooperation partners. A number of difficulties are due to poor institutional capabilities and the lack of effective machinery for monitoring and evaluation in almost all the institutions which are SRAP liaison centres. This is also why most of the SRAPs specify institution-building as one of the priorities in their fields of cooperation.

7. Where funding of the process is concerned, it should be noted that the quality of the activities conducted during this initial stage furnishes adequate proof to justify greater interest on the part of the members of these subregional organizations as well as their principal cooperation partners in

the ongoing activities. However, the reports indicate that in some subregions, the financial commitment of the member countries has remained very poor, whereas others have made a substantial effort.

8. It is important to emphasize in this regard the particular importance attached in the various reports to the establishment of funds or financial machinery to facilitate the subregional processes.

(b) The RAP

9. The RAP process was conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Convention and the guidance laid down by the first Pan-African Conference on the implementation of the Convention (Ouagadougou, March 1997). The major concern is still that of maintaining a rate of evolution compatible with the level of progress in the national (NAP) and subregional (SRAP) action programmes so that the three processes provide mutually beneficial feedback.

10. The implementation of phase 1 of the RAP process since March 1998, through the organization of thematic workshops, has supplied material which may contribute to better evaluation of the present state of affairs and offer a clearer approach to eliminating the possible risks of duplication.

11. In that regard, one of the lessons drawn from the thematic workshops exercise in support of the RAP process is undoubtedly the consensus which has emerged on the need for a common understanding which is more operational and closer to the Convention's concerns, rather than a classic and basically inoperative approach to the concept of "network". Discussions, sometimes very lively, on experience with the classic system of network operation in Africa made it possible to further clarify the objectives of the Convention and identify more clearly the existing scope for drawing on the scientific and technical potential which Africa as a whole could mobilize in order to contribute positively to the implementation of the Convention.

12. One of the major lessons is that there are many scientific and technical achievements which, if better used, more fully exploited and more appropriately popularized, could have enabled a decisive contribution to be made to efforts to combat drought and desertification in Africa. It is this path that the African RAP process is taking, by involving all the participants in regional cooperative activities, as well as their main interested partners.

13. As for the funding of the process and the issue of partnership agreements, it is heartening to observe that many of those working at the regional and multilateral levels as well as bilateral partners have made a variety of efforts to follow and support the ongoing process.

III. PROGRESS REPORT ON THE SUBREGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMMES

1. In West Africa

14. The West African subregion has been engaged since September 1994 in drawing up a subregional action programme to combat desertification (SRAP) in pursuance of article 10 of the Convention's regional annex for Africa.

Sixteen countries in the subregion (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo) plus Chad are covered by the programme and have contributed to its preparation, coordinated by CILSS and ECOWAS.

(a) The areas of cooperation under the programme and measures taken or planned

15. Eight priority areas for cooperation had been identified when the process was launched and were coordinated at the regional level in various ways:

- Sustainable management of shared water resources;
- Sustainable management of shared plant and animal resources;
- Scientific and technical cooperation;
- Development and rational management of energy resources;
- Efforts to combat pests affecting crops, forest species and animals;
- Early warning of drought and mitigation of its impacts;
- Information, training, communication;
- Policies for coordination of marketing systems and creation of joint infrastructure.

16. Between the adoption of the Convention in June 1994 and May 1999, several activities were undertaken, dealing in particular with:

- Adoption of institutional measures for implementation;
- Definition of eligibility criteria for SRAP activities;
- Designation of focal points for the thematic areas selected;
- Arrangements for support to countries of the subregion in the context of their respective NAP processes;
- Establishment of machinery to facilitate the exchange of information, experience and know-how;
- Formulation and adoption of the SRAP and adoption of a strategy for mobilizing the financial resources needed for its implementation.

17. CILSS and ECOWAS were designated liaison centres for the preparatory activities and coordination of implementation. The institutional framework for coordination relating to the SRAP in West Africa is composed of the following organs of these two institutions:

- The ECOWAS Conference of Heads of State and Government plus Chad is the highest decision-making body;

- The Subregional Forum of Actors is a body composed of all the individuals and organizations that have a role to play in managing the subregion's shared resources;

- The Subregional Coordinating Committee is the body entrusted with the principal functions of monitoring, planning and coordination of the SRAP;

- A number of thematic groups have been set up and constitute forums both for scientific and technical analysis and for consultation and coordination of the actions to be taken. Leaders of these groups have been appointed.

(b) The consultative process in support of the preparation and implementation of the subregional action programme and partnership agreements concluded with the developed countries and/or other interested entities

18. The SRAP process has been punctuated by a series of regional meetings since the adoption of the Convention in June 1994 in Paris. The following are noteworthy:

- September 1994: Ministerial meeting in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, on the initiative of CILSS, leading to a decision to draw up a single SRAP for the whole of West Africa;

- July 1995: Subregional conference in Dakar, Senegal, a decisive stage in the launching of the SRAP process gathering together the national focal points, the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) from the subregion and the principal cooperation partners;

- February 1996: Meeting of IGOs from the subregion in Lomé, Togo, to define a strategy for cooperation in the rational management of shared natural resources;

- March 1997: Meeting of NGOs from English-speaking West African countries to agree on the involvement of NGOs in the process of implementation of the Convention;

- July 1997: Subregional forum in Niamey, Niger, on identifying subregional priorities in the area of shared natural resources;

- December 1997: Meeting of the Subregional Coordinating Committee on institutional, financial and technical questions in Accra, Ghana;

- January and March 1998: Meetings of the thematic groups in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso;

- September 1988: Meeting of the Subregional Coordinating Committee to validate the SRAP preliminary draft in Cotonou, Benin;

- May 1999: Meeting of environment ministers from the subregion plus Chad in Lomé, Togo, to adopt the SRAP.

19. CILSS also supported meetings among the national coordinating bodies (NCBs) and between the NCBs and the NGOs which were held in Bamako, Mali, in December 1994 and Banjul, Gambia, in August 1996 to adopt a joint NAP preparation methodology in the subregion; other meetings such as the meeting in Bamako in April 1996 offered an opportunity for more thorough examination of the questions of resource mobilization for the financing of the NAPs and improvement of participation by members of civil society in the national processes.

20. In accordance with article 11, paragraph (a) of the regional annex for Africa, activities involved in the formulation of transboundary desertification control pilot projects have been carried out as a part of cooperation between AMU and CILSS. These projects, whose purpose is to contribute to creating favourable conditions for integrated local development in the border regions of the Maghreb and the Sahel, are aimed as much at the grass-roots communities as at government and cooperation partners.

(c) Financial allocations by affected country parties of the subregion in support of the implementation of the SRAP as well as technical and financial assistance received or needed

21. The SRAP process in West Africa has now completed its start-up phase, during which the financing of activities was for the most part sporadic. At the current stage, only the resources mobilized by CILSS from its traditional partners and the support granted through the Convention secretariat has enabled the above-mentioned activities to be implemented, so that it would be inappropriate at this stage to speak of partnership agreements and firm commitments by cooperation partners. Total resources mobilized to date amount to about US$ 500,000.

22. It should be noted that given the scale of future requirements in terms of financial and human resources, the lack of partnership machinery and adequate financing of the SRAP might constitute a rather serious handicap to the normal operation of the process. In that regard, there are plans to reactivate as soon as possible the project for the creation of financial machinery to facilitate the SRAP process in West Africa.

(d) Benchmarks and indicators

23. CILSS contributed to the formulation of a joint project prepared with the help of the Sahara and Sahel Observatory (OSS) for the development of a matrix of indicators and benchmarks for evaluation of the NAPs and the SRAPs.

2. In southern Africa

24. In southern Africa, the launching of the process of drawing up a subregional action programme was based on the earlier initiatives which had enabled desertification control efforts in the subregion to be organized around such major programmes and projects as the Kalahari-Namib project, for example. Following the adoption of the Convention in 1994, the countries of the subregion (Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe as well as the Democratic Republic of Congo and Seychelles, which joined SADC later) took action to define the content of the SRAP within the framework of their cooperation in SADC-Environment and Land Management Sector (ELMS).

(a) The areas of cooperation under the programme and measures taken or planned

25. Following several subregional meetings organized in keeping with the principles set out in the Convention, the southern African subregional SRAP comprising seven priority areas for cooperation was approved and adopted by the SADC Council of Ministers in August 1997. The seven priority areas selected relate to:

- Capacity-building and institutional strengthening;
- Strengthening of early warning systems;
- Cooperation for the sustainable development of shared natural resources and ecosystems;
- Information collection, management and exchange;
- Development of the process of transfer of appropriate technologies to the community level;
- Development of alternative sources of energy;
- Socio-economic issues.

26. Preliminary steps were taken to assist in institutional strengthening and to provide a solid grounding for the initiatives planned under the SRAP process:

- Selection in 1997 of the Desert Research Foundation of Namibia as the subregional centre of excellence for capacity-building;

- Training of trainers;

- Support for research.

These initiatives prepared the ground for the effective launching of the process.

27. Various specialist technical agencies of SADC have also been entrusted with follow-up in each of the other priority areas selected; some specific programmes such as the Kalahari-Namib action plan and the activities of the Multidisciplinary Scientific and Technical Consultative Committee (MSTCC, set up in June 1998) are coordinated by the SADC-ELMS secretariat itself.

(b) The consultative process in support of the implementation of the SRAP and partnership agreements concluded with the developed country parties and the other interested entities

28. The SRAP process prompted considerable consultation in the subregion following its launch between May 1993 and March 1997; more than five subregional workshops (including the Maseru subregional forum which adopted the SRAP) and six meetings on issues relating to this programme took place in the following chronological order:

- May 1993, Francistown, Botswana: Subregional meeting to identify key issues of interest for the SADC countries;

- June 1994, Mbabane, Swaziland: Subregional meeting to review and adopt the regional case study on drought and desertification in the SADC region;

- March 1995, Pretoria, South Africa: Subregional workshop on planning the SRAP process;

- January 1996, Windhoek, Namibia: Subregional meeting on the SRAP priority areas;

- March 1997, Maseru, Lesotho: Subregional forum to study the preliminary draft of the SRAP;

- August 1997, Maseru, Lesotho: SADC Council of Ministers to adopt the SADC SRAP;

- April 1998, Gaborone, Botswana: Subregional meeting to consider the recommendations on the implementation of the Kalahari-Namib project under the SRAP;

- April 1998, Harare, Zimbabwe: Subregional workshop on activities relating to the harmonization of the early warning systems on desertification in the SADC region.

29. Other meetings offered an opportunity to review existing projects and programmes and to harmonize the strategies and methodologies laid down by the national focal points and the NGOs in the implementation of the NAP and SRAP processes.

30. The successful holding of these various meetings also enhanced the credibility of SADC-ELMS, which successfully concluded substantial partnership agreements both among the SADC member States themselves and between SADC-ELMS and certain traditional cooperation partners.

(c) Financial allocations by affected country parties of the subregion and technical and financial assistance received or needed

31. Financing of the southern African SRAP process has so far involved for the most part contributions from SADC member States in the form of personnel or logistical support for the substantive and practical organization of the subregional meetings.

32. In addition, the process has benefited from financial resources and technical inputs provided by various international organizations and agencies, including the Convention secretariat. However, meeting future financing requirements will demand the continuation and strengthening of the role played to date by the member States and the cooperation partners.

(d) Benchmarks and indicators

33. The principal conclusions reached at the Maseru workshop enabled the Multidisciplinary Scientific and Technical Consultative Committee to be entrusted with the formulation, implementation and monitoring/evaluation of this activity.

3. In Eastern Africa

34. The Eastern African subregion is involved in the process of preparation of a subregional action programme to combat desertification through the agency of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). The preparation of a subregional action programme in the context of the Convention was initiated with the holding of the Asmara, Eritrea, subregional meeting in August 1995.

(a) The areas of cooperation under the programme and measures taken or planned

35. In the framework of the SRAP process, nine areas of cooperation have been selected by IGAD:

- Development and management of transboundary natural resources;
- Fostering an enabling environment (legislative, institutional, economic and policy aspects);
- Collection, analysis and exchange of information relating to the SRAP;

- Research and development;
- Education and public awareness;
- Coordination of programmes to develop alternative energy sources;
- Cooperation in the field of efforts to combat crop pests, floating plants, vectors of human and animal diseases and plant diseases;
- Early warning systems and joint plans for mitigating the effects of drought;
- Capacity-building.

36. The activities related to the SRAP have been incorporated into the IGAD secretariat's work programme and their implementation has been planned in phases comprising identification of the priority areas of the Convention not covered by the activities under the current IGAD programme and their harmonization with the implementation of these priority projects and programmes.

(b) The consultative process in support of the preparation and implementation of the SRAP and partnership agreements with the developed countries and/or other interested entities

37. In accordance with the Convention's regional annex for Africa, the IGAD secretariat organized a series of meetings with the aim of laying down the general path to be followed in the pursuit of the Convention process. The following may be mentioned:

- September 1994, Khartoum, Sudan: Meeting to define the methodology for the implementation of the Convention in the subregion;
- August 1995, Asmara, Eritrea: Consultations to agree on priority areas of the SRAP;
- February 1997, Nairobi, Kenya: Subregional forum to examine the preliminary draft of the SRAP.

38. In the course of these activities, the IGAD secretariat benefited from substantial support from traditional cooperation partners. Partnership agreements were signed in this context and financial support was obtained for the pursuit of certain priority activities.

(c) Financial allocations by affected country parties of the subregion and technical and financial assistance received or needed

39. The statutory contributions of the IGAD member States have been paid regularly, and this has made it possible to ensure part of the funding for the

agency's subregional activities using its own resources. The political will expressed by the States of the subregion in this way has stimulated an increase in the assistance provided by many cooperation partners, including the Convention secretariat.

(d) Benchmarks and indicators

40. The Secretariat General of IGAD has been instructed to ensure the monitoring and evaluation of the process. Accordingly, its committee responsible for science and technology has begun work on developing the indicators and benchmarks needed for the continuous evaluation of the SRAP process. Initiatives have been taken to identify working principles suited to the needs and specific features of the subregion in terms of the nature of the indicators to be devised, complementarity between the NAPs and the SRAPs, the level of participation by existing networks and other factors.

4. In North Africa

41. The member countries of the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) were able to initiate their process of preparation of the subregional action programme as early as the month of October 1994, when the first international meeting on desertification control in the Maghreb was held in Rabat, Morocco. In November 1995, in Tunis, the AMU secretariat also organized an information workshop for the Maghreb on the implementation of the Convention.

(a) The areas of cooperation under the programme and measures taken or planned

42. Eight priority action areas were identified and selected for the SRAP process following the preliminary consultations (October 1994) which were held in the context of the implementation of the Convention.

- Sustainable management of transboundary natural resources;
- Coordination of programmes to develop alternative energy sources;
- Cooperation for the management and control of efforts to combat pests and plant and animal diseases;
- Capacity-building;
- Scientific and technical cooperation;
- Early warning system;
- Exchange of experience and information;
- Fostering an enabling environment.

(b) The consultative process in support of the preparation and implementation of the subregional action programme and partnership agreements with the developed countries and other interested entities

43. The strategy adopted to achieve the objectives of the SRAP essentially follows a comprehensive and prudent approach based on the links between the national activities and the subregional activities. Within this approach, the AMU secretariat strives to work with the countries of the subregion to integrate efforts to combat desertification in national strategies for the elimination of poverty and the improvement of the quality of life in the Maghreb as a whole.

44. In so doing, AMU bases its activities on the application of the key principles of the Convention - the participatory approach, the principle of subsidiarity, the consultative approach and the conclusion of partnership agreements.

45. An initial meeting organized by the AMU secretariat in Rabat in April 1997, attended by representatives of the Convention secretariat, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), OSS, the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the African Organization of Cartography and remote Sensing, as well as Environmental and Development Action in the Third World (ENDA), had gathered the AMU experts together in order to review the preliminary actions designed to allow the activities making up the SRAP to be launched.

46. Among the steps planned to give the process the impetus required, mention should be made of the project for the setting up of a body to coordinate the subregional Convention activities scheduled within AMU, as well as the establishment of a subregional consultative body. In this regard, it should be mentioned that the holding of the first subregional forum to approve various institutional structures and the projects listed in the SRAP is scheduled for September 1999 in Algiers.

(c) Financial allocations by affected country parties of the subregion in support of the process and technical and financial assistance received or needed

47. The establishment of a subregional desertification control fund has been planned to support the implementation of the SRAP; this fund should receive contributions from the member States of AMU and the cooperation partners. The financing requirements for the project for the establishment of a SRAP coordinating unit have been evaluated at US$ 1,295,750; financial assistance is sought for US$ 925,000 of this sum.

(d) Benchmarks and indicators

48. Several provisions of the Convention relate to the creation of indicators to monitor progress made in the implementation of the Convention, and so a proposal for a matrix of indicators relating to the implementation and monitoring of the SRAP has been initiated, with assistance from OSS, inter alia.

IV. PROGRESS IN THE PREPARATION OF THE REGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMME

49. Resolution No. 2 adopted by the Pan-African Conference on the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), and efforts in Africa to follow up the results of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), have prepared the ground for the launching of the process of preparation of the Convention's regional action programme for Africa.

(a) The areas of cooperation under the programme and measures taken or planned

50. In accordance with the provisions of article 13 of the regional annex for Africa, which provides an overall definition of the priority areas in which the RAP offers comparative advantages, the Pan-African Conference identified as follows the areas of cooperation where the priority activities relating to the RAP process for Africa should be carried out:

- Ecological monitoring, natural resources mapping, remote sensing and early warning systems;
- Agroforestry and soil conservation;
- Rational management of rangelands and promotion of fodder crops;
- Rational management of the water resources of the major transboundary river, lake and hydrogeological basins;
- Promotion of renewable energy sources and environment-friendly technologies;
- Sustainable farm production systems;
- Fostering an enabling environment for efforts to combat desertification and capacity-building.

(b) The consultative process in support of the preparation and implementation of the programme and partnership agreements

51. During the period under consideration, the activities relating to the RAP process for Africa were essentially centred on the holding of the seven regional thematic workshops recommended by the Pan-African Conference. By 30 June 1999, six out of the seven workshops planned had been held, and the seventh was scheduled in Harare, Zimbabwe, from 20 to 23 July 1999.

52. The objectives of these workshops were basically as follows:

- To identify, for each of the thematic areas suggested, the priority actions and activities which could constitute the backbone of the regional action programme;

- To propose the institutional and financial arrangements required to support the implementation of the recommendations stemming from the various workshops and the monitoring of the RAP in general.

53. Generally speaking, between 50 and 60 participants representing a variety of subregional and regional agencies operating in the areas concerned, as well as intergovernmental organizations which were liaison centres for the SRAPs, United Nations system organizations, African country parties, NGOs and cooperation partners took part in the work of the six workshops.

54. Participation in the workshops and the choice of venue followed the rule of equitable geographical distribution and that of the search for a sound balance between different parties involved at this level: regional or subregional specialist African institutions, international agencies, civil society and NGOs of subregional or regional significance, African country parties and focal points of the Convention selected by subregion, subregional institutions, SRAP focal points.

55. The conclusions and recommendations of the workshops already held may be summarized as follows:

(i) Regional workshop on the promotion of a network on ecological monitoring, natural resources mapping, remote sensing and early warning systems in the context of the RAP/UNCCD

56. The workshop was held at the Regional Centre for Services in Surveying, Mapping and Remote Sensing (RCSSMRS) in Nairobi, Kenya, from 5 to 8 May 1998, in cooperation with the Kenyan Government and with financial support from Germany. The main conclusions were:

- As a result of the wide diversity in methods of evaluating desertification processes and bases for collecting data, there is a great need for standardization, harmonization and integration of scientific and technical data on ecological monitoring and natural resources mapping. This situation necessitates modernization and better coordination of the data collection and processing activities carried out at different levels by the specialized institutions operating in Africa;

- There is an urgent need to remove the major constraints of the lack of management personnel and the inadequate skills in the use of remote sensing and modern management of early warning systems to prevent the effects of desertification and drought in Africa.

57. The priority actions planned are designed to draw greater benefit from advanced technologies for combating desertification and/or mitigating the effects of drought. They will make it possible to initiate standard-setting activities (definition and follow-up of standards and specifications) with a view to the integration, standardization and harmonization of methods and techniques for the collection and processing of observation data; the actions should also make it possible to finalize basic mapping work, especially in a number of affected countries and regions, and to pursue and improve the thematic activities of ecological monitoring and natural resources mapping;

lastly, these actions are designed to strengthen the exchange of experience in remote sensing data collection and interpretation, including the acquisition and processing of satellite data, their standardization and their harmonization as well as their dissemination using modern information technologies (the Internet, geographical information system (GIS), Web pages, information bulletins, etc.).

58. As regards institutional arrangements for improving and strengthening regional cooperation, the workshop concluded that there was a need to establish coordination machinery to be headed by one or two focal points corresponding to the two themes which had underpinned the proceedings of the workshop. The operational details devised during this Nairobi workshop were consolidated with all the observations made during the five other workshops dealing with the RAP process. These institutional arrangements are annexed to this report.

(ii) Regional workshop on promotion of an agroforestry and soil conservation network in the context of the RAP/UNCCD

59. This workshop was held in Bamako, Mali, from 30 June to 3 July 1998, in cooperation with the International Centre for Research in Agroforestry (ICRAF) and the Government of Mali, and with financial support from the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Government of Finland.

60. After conducting a critical survey of the current contribution being made by agroforestry and soil conservation techniques to efforts to combat desertification in Africa, the participants drew the following conclusions from their work:

- The application of agroforestry and soil conservation techniques in Africa varies not only with the nature and quality of the soils, but also depending on the ecological zone, as well as socio-organizational factors;

- The major constraints to the wider application of these techniques in Africa have to do with the fact that little is being done at the present time to exploit the potential of agroforestry as a means of combating soil degradation, wide variations in rainfall (which has resulted in the disappearance of a large number of local tree species), the low level of fertility of many African soils and the shortage of productive investment in these sectors of activity;

- Other factors are to be taken into consideration such as those relating to land tenure and the lack of qualified personnel, poor application and inadequate dissemination of the results of research and development in programmes for the rehabilitation and management of degraded land, the failure to integrate agroforestry and soil conservation measures systematically in other rural development activities, the spread of poverty and the impact of an unfavourable socio-economic environment.

61. The recommendations made to remove the various constraints identified relate to the following:

- The need for a reorientation of agroforestry and soil conservation research policies towards meeting people's needs;
- The search for solutions to the land tenure issue and the raising of overall soil fertility through broader popularization of improved traditional practices and technologies;
- The development and breeding of high-yield species and their distribution among farmers;
- The spread of participatory agroforestry systems, particularly in the framework of transboundary programmes for the integrated development of river and lake basins;
- Support for action to build capacity in the fields of agroforestry and soil conservation at all levels of decision-making, particularly the local level, through cooperation with IGOs which are liaison centres for the SRAPs.

62. Lastly, the participants agreed on a strategy for strengthening regional cooperation which would ensure that agroforestry and soil conservation research activities made a greater contribution to combating desertification. This approach should take account of the need for harmonizing the strategies and policies of each institution with a view to better cooperation between institutions and centres for specialized research and training and NGOs. This should be done through the implementation of joint programmes for training and the exchange of experience, the development of supporting measures, inter alia in the fields of dissemination of the results of research and development as well as creation of awareness among decision makers.

63. As far as institutional arrangements are concerned, the workshop recommended inter alia the promotion, in the form of a network, of regional coordination machinery with a mandate corresponding to the consensus which emerged from the deliberations of the Nairobi workshop. Lastly, the workshop endorsed the arrangements decided on by the first thematic workshop on the RAP.

(iii) Regional workshop on the establishment of a network for the promotion of the rational use of rangelands and development of fodder crops in Africa in the context of the RAP/UNCCD

64. This workshop was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 4 to 7 August 1998 in cooperation with the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) and the Government of Ethiopia, with financial support from IFAD and the Government of Finland.

65. The conclusions and recommendations of this meeting may be summarized as follows:

- Research may lead to an increase in the nutritional value and yield of fodder as a result of the use of local and exotic species. In that regard, it is advisable to make use of the interaction between agro-industrial and agro-pastoral systems in order to raise productivity;

- Training, a vital activity in most specialist institutions, must be focused more on African concerns, notably by means of capacity-building activities needed for development in forestry, stock-raising and farming; in future this training should be targeted on technicians, extension agents and the users of resources themselves;

- Strengthening partnership links and networking among individuals, communities and institutions constitute important tools in addressing the problems linked to the management of rangelands and the development of fodder production.

66. To that end, it is important to apply a sound decentralization policy and ensure the establishment of associations or committees for the management of water, animals and herds, as well as programmes. Harmonization of grazing codes and regulation of transhumance at the subregional level remain fundamental for RAP activities.

67. Cooperation through networking, particularly among specialist institutions, not only facilitates the exchange of technologies, information and experience, but also the harmonization and coordination of policies, strategies and action programmes for the sound use of rangelands and the development of fodder crops at the continent-wide level.

68. Regarding institutional arrangements, the workshop endorsed the suggestions adopted by the previous workshops.

(iv) Regional workshop on the promotion of an African network on the integrated management of the water resources of the major transboundary river, lake and hydrogeological basins in Africa in the context of the RAP/UNCCD

69. This workshop was held in Abidjan, Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, from 29 September to 2 October 1998 in cooperation with the African Development Bank (ADB) and with financial support from the Governments of Italy, Germany and France.

70. The main conclusions and recommendations may be summarized as follows:

In Africa there exist a large number of institutions with long experience in the management of river, lake and hydrogeological basins, several of which already have a master plan for management. The activities of these institutions are, however, notable for a low level of exchange of information and expertise, pointing to the need for greater synergy between

these activities, with the aim of optimizing their contribution to efforts to combat desertification. In that regard, the activities planned under the RAP should make it possible to survey the current state of affairs and identify the main constraints encountered in the implementation of the activities carried out by the institutions which are useful in efforts to combat desertification, and the implementation of strategies for the removal of these constraints. Among the many constraints identified by the workshop in this area, special mention should be made of the following:

- The fact that financial and human resources are inadequate to support the programmes for the development and integrated management of shared water resources;

- The conditionalities imposed by lenders on economic investment programmes in the framework of structural adjustment policies;

- The lack of a firm political commitment to these water development programmes on the part of governments.

71. The workshops recommended, inter alia, the implementation of strategies emphasizing technological innovations, reforestation programmes in degraded river basins, the collection of information and data, capacity-building, the promotion of participatory pilot projects, support for existing programmes and the promotion of monitoring and evaluation machinery.

72. A solution to the problem of funding the activities of the agencies working in areas of concern under the Convention lies in efforts to draw greater benefit from the opportunities offered by the Convention and mobilization of substantial resources by the parties concerned. In that regard, the workshop recommended greater involvement by the African Development Bank, other regional partners and cooperation partners in these activities.

73. As regards institutional issues, the Abidjan workshop made it possible to round out the suggestions made by the two previous workshops on networking by recommending the preparation of a manual concerning the operation of the thematic regional cooperation networks. The institutional arrangements adopted by the previous workshops were also endorsed.

(v) Regional workshop on the promotion of a network on new and renewable energies and environmentally sound technologies in the context of the RAP/UNCCD

74. This workshop was held in Tunis, Tunisia, from 26 to 29 October 1998 in cooperation with the Government of Tunisia through the Agence Nationale de la Maîtrise de l'Énergie. The World Bank's regional programme on traditional energies and the joint energy and environment institute of the French-speaking countries also made financial and technical contributions to the organization of the workshop.

75. The main conclusions and recommendations drawn up by the workshop may be summarized as follows:

The activities conducted by the African institutions at the national, subregional and regional level in the field of renewable energies are very diverse. However, they may be grouped into three main categories:

- Popularization and dissemination of renewable energy technologies and environmentally sound technologies;
- Support activities and promotion of renewable energies;
- Natural resource management activities with an energy component.

76. These activities suffer from a variety of constraints, from the high cost of technologies and equipment to poor coordination among projects carried out at different levels (State, intergovernmental agencies, lenders) via the low level of project funding and project durability, the low level of exchanges of information/communication, inadequate knowledge of the environment and of human resources, and the unfavourable economic climate for the participation of the private sector. In that regard, the main recommendations of the workshop relate to speeding up the networking of national, subregional and regional institutions working in the field of renewable energies in order to improve the creation and coordination of databases, the strengthening of information and awareness creation among decision makers and elected politicians as well as the public in general, the implementation of transboundary pilot demonstration projects, and contributions to the implementation of training and education programmes.

77. As regards the arrangements for strengthening regional cooperation, the workshop was of the view that the rational application of the RAP should allow the Convention to support activities involving the compilation of an inventory of regional, subregional and national skills. It was also agreed to facilitate the circulation of information and experience built up and the harmonization of policies and instruments for action relating to renewable energies. The workshop also noted that substantial financial resources exist at the international level, but access to finance remains limited. In that regard, the workshop identified a series of approaches to be made to the financial institutions and multilateral and bilateral cooperation partners which could provide support to African initiatives in this field.

78. Lastly, and as in the case of the previous workshops, the Tunis workshop considered the issue of networking and provided additional inputs for the drawing up of the terms of reference for the thematic networks to be promoted, particularly bearing in mind the special needs in the field of renewable energies and the promotion of environmentally sound technologies.

(vi) Regional workshop on the establishment of a network for the promotion of a system of sustainable agricultural output in the context of the RAP/UNCCD

79. This workshop was held in Sadoré, near Niamey in the Niger, from 23 to 26 March 1999, in cooperation with the International Crops Research

Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), a programme on desert margin zones and the Government of the Niger. The organization of the workshop was financially supported by the Governments of Germany and Finland.

80. The main conclusions and recommendations arising from this meeting may be summarized as follows:

- Taking as a basis for analysis the major concern of the Convention constituted for Africa by the quest for food security and the elimination of poverty, the workshop reaffirmed the need to reorient present African agricultural production systems towards objectives of sustainability. The main constraints identified to the achievement of these objectives relate to: environmental constraints, technological constraints, socio-cultural constraints, economic constraints, institutional constraints and political constraints.

- Among the strategy elements which can contribute to a policy reorientation in this field, the participants in the workshop mentioned numerous aspects related to land, water, inputs, manpower, consumption, population, collective political will, international trade and the market, competitiveness and technologies.

- Concerning the institutional arrangements which should be introduced to develop and strengthen regional cooperation in this area, the workshop also considered this matter in the light of the conclusions of the previous workshops while recommending that account should be taken of the existence of similar machinery and the need to merge certain complementary activities.

81. After the holding of six workshops, it is clear that at the present stage of the process, only the partnership agreements concluded with the Organization of African Unity (OAU), ADB, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the Government of Cote d'Ivoire and a few bilateral partners in the framework of the holding of the thematic workshops as well as the activities for the formulation of the transboundary pilot projects make it possible to have resources available in support of the process. However, positive intentions have been announced by a number of partner agencies and countries which should enable the process to be pursued.

82. The process of establishment of a regional coordinating unit (RCU) to support the implementation of the regional action programme has now passed the decisive stage of the signature of a memorandum of agreement with the African Development Bank, the institution which will host the unit in question. The steps required for an immediate start to its activities, inter alia through the implementation of the recommendations stemming from the thematic workshops and the preparations for the regional forum for the adoption of the RAP strategy document, have been taken. The RCU will be operational before COP 3. Its different activities will be monitored and evaluated by means of a regional decision-making mechanism (Steering Committee); preparations for the meetings of this body will be carried out on the basis of the reports evaluating the activities of the thematic networks.

(c) Financial allocations by affected country parties of the region in support of the implementation of the Convention and technical and financial assistance received or needed

83. Following the recommendation made by the Pan-African Conference, the idea of establishing a regional facilitation fund to support the RAP process was discussed in certain workshops and a study is to be commissioned from the African Development Bank in cooperation with other regional and international partners for the establishment of this fund.

(d) Benchmarks and indicators

84. The first exchanges with the partners interested in the devising of indicators of progress and evaluation of the RAP process (OSS, UNDP, African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), etc.) occurred during the proceedings of the regional workshop on the promotion of a network on ecological monitoring, natural resources mapping, remote sensing and early warning systems which was held in Nairobi in March 1998. This issue should form one of the principal RAP activities in its role in coordinating the implementation of the Convention at the subregional levels. In that regard, it should be remembered that results have already been obtained in this field as a result of the work carried out by AMU, IGAD and CILSS in cooperation with OSS and the Club du Sahel.

Annex

DESCRIPTIVE PROFILE FOR THE PROMOTION OF A THEMATIC NETWORK FOR COOPERATION IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE REGIONAL ACTION PROGRAMME IN AFRICA

Institutional arrangements

The conclusions of the various thematic workshops offered an opportunity to identify the conditions needed for better networking among the institutions, organizations, agencies and bodies concerned, in the framework of the regional action programme to combat desertification. Broadly speaking, four main points emerge from the discussions, namely: justification for networking, institutional arrangements, criteria for selecting an institutional focal point and selection procedure for this focal point.

A. Thematic network

(a) Definition

The network is a forum for liaison among institutions or organizations with the aim of better cooperation, concerted action, coordination and harmonization of policies and strategies in the context of the implementation of the RAP in Africa.

(b) Objectives of the network

- To facilitate exchanges of local information and data, experience, knowledge and know-how of the institutions involved in the implementation of the Convention, in particular at the regional level;

- To establish an integrated operational information system, strengthen the existing documentation centres and set up a data bank in the selected areas for use by those involved in the Convention process, notably at the regional level;

- To ensure consistency and implementation of the programmes at the national and subregional levels;

- To facilitate the transfer, acquisition and adaptation of technologies, scientific and technical cooperation among the network members and with the outside world by striving to include balance between men and women in its activities.

(c) Network operation arrangements

Membership of the networks will not be restricted. However, there will be various categories of member, and members must have experience in and capacity for working and cooperating on the different topics selected for the networks to be promoted. The workshops also made it possible to reach a decision on the functional relationships between the RAP, the SRAPs and the NAPs. Special stress is placed on the need to ensure better linkages between these three levels. The workshops also recommended the preparation of a

network operation procedures manual with the assistance of the Convention secretariat. This procedures manual will pinpoint the conditions attached to membership of the networks.

(d) Network composition

The networks will be composed of various institutions and bodies (public and private) which specialize in the priority areas to be selected, representatives of civil society, especially NGOs active in efforts to combat desertification, as well as development partners.

(e) Principal tasks of the networks

- To organize meetings and seminars on relevant issues in cooperation with the RAP Regional Coordinating Unit and publish the results of these consultations, as well as information relating to the main questions of interest to the network;

- To assist African institutions, agencies and countries to gain access to regularly updated data and information which are related to the priority areas to be selected;

- To foster the use of modern communication tools (the Internet, Web pages, etc.) to facilitate exchanges among network members and beyond;

- To list available expertise and select appropriate means of communication to make it known to the operators;

The details of the tasks to be pursued by the focal point will be finalized in consultation with the designated institution.

B. Focal point

(a) Criteria for selecting the focal point

These criteria include, inter alia:

- A resolve and commitment to cooperate and contribute to the formulation of the RAP;

- Proven capability (geographical representation, human resources, competence, adequate infrastructure);

- The activities of the focal point should be directly linked to efforts to combat desertification;

- An ability and readiness to cooperate and accomplish joint and complementary tasks or activities with other institutions at the regional and international levels;

- The ability to mobilize financial resources and harmonize its own activities with those of the network.

(b) Selection of the focal point

As regards the choice of the focal point, the various thematic workshops recommended that the Convention secretariat should invite all the specialist institutions to indicate their wish to host the focal point and submit their applications to the Convention secretariat on the basis of the criteria and the role laid down for the focal point. The various thematic workshops also recommend that these applications should reach the secretariat before the forum on the African regional action programme to combat desertification scheduled for the end of September 1999. The secretariat is requested to compile the information contained in the applications and submit the list to the ministerial segment of the RAP forum, which will designate the focal point for each thematic network.